

THE NEW THEOLOGY.

By Rev. H. W. Burwell.

Its Teachings Concerning Jesus Christ.

Humanity's hope has always been built upon the enduring principles of the Gospel of Christ. His immaculate birth, eternal Divinity, atoning merit, advocacy with the Father and final judgment of all mankind, stand out as the fundamental truths without which all hope is a fiction, faith is worthless, and salvation an absolute impossibility. But what says this New Theology concerning these precious truths that through the centuries have blessed our dark world with more light and joy than all other influences combined?

Dr. Crapsey denied the virgin birth of Christ and defended this denial, because, he said, it had been forced upon him "by a knowledge of the facts in the case." We have long labored under the impression that this grand event transpired many centuries before Dr. Crapsey had the goodness to be born. Whence then, does he derive his knowledge of the facts connected with it, facts which have forced upon him the necessity of denying that Jesus was born by the power of the Holy Ghost of a virgin mother and not be ordinary generation? If humanity has been groping in the dark through all these centuries, and Dr. Crapsey has the true light that will lead us to the truth, his negligence becomes criminal when he does not let it shine for the illumination of his benighted fellows.

Hear, also, Dr. Campbell speak: "Jesus was God, but so are we. He was God because his life was the expression of Divine love. We, too, are one with God in so far as our lives express the same thing. Jesus was not God in the sense that he possessed an infinite consciousness; no more are we. Jesus expressed fully and completely, in so far as finite consciousness could, that aspect of the nature of God which we have called the eternal Son, or Christ, or ideal Man who is the soul of the universe."

Thus we have it, that Jesus was born as all other men are born, is only divine as all other men partake of the same nature.

Naturally, we ask, What of this great fact that we call sin? The New Theologians describe this all the way from "man's sad misfortune" to "man's quest after God" with such terms as "selfishness" and "a stage in man's moral evolution" and the like, thrown between.

If sin be only selfishness, or any of these things, the very idea of guilt is impossible. Extract guilt and the necessity for the atonement is gone forever. It sinks to the simple "realization of the unity of the individual with the race and of the race with God. It has, essentially and originally, no relation to sin, but can only be realized by giving up selfishness." The resurrection is declared to be nothing more than the "psychic manifestation of the departed Lord"—the very thing that it was not, if there is the slightest meaning in terms.

The very idea of a soul-resurrection at once reduces itself to an absurdity, for it can be no resurrection at all. The soul does not and can not die, and death is a necessary pre-supposition to the very idea of a resurrection.

Thus, with one fell sweep, everything that could necessitate man's approach to God, on the one hand, or hinder it, on the other, is brushed aside. Humanity stands out as the equal of its Creator and Savior, a little more unfortunate than God or Christ have been in the development of the higher aspirations, but still capable, unaided and alone, not only to work out its own salvation, but to ascend to the fulness of Divinity. The terrible fact of sin, with its crushing weight of woe and condemnation, both present and future, is nothing. God is the universe, man is God, while Jesus Christ is but the highest development of man who shows man what he may be and how to attain to this sublime ideal. May God pity the poor soul that depends upon such husks for its spiritual sustenance.

Its Teachings Concerning the Bible as the Inspired Word of God.

The very idea of any external authority in matters pertaining to religious knowledge and outward conduct is repudiated, and the seat of all authority is declared to be within the individual conscience, rather than without. The dear old Bible no longer speaks with the authority of its Divine Author, but, we are told, has been reconstructed upon the principles of evolution. Its declarations are not binding upon any conscience unless that conscience sees fit to make them so. It does not, under the New Theology, retain even the smallest modicum of authority, and the Divine accent that has ever been its life and justification before the world, they eliminate with a lofty flourish as being altogether unnecessary for the advanced thinker.

What, then, is the source of all authority? The New Theologian answers, "Christian consciousness." Dr. Campbell speaks of the same thing under the title of "Subliminal consciousness." He offers this description of his lawgiver and judge. "Man is a mode of the infinite. His true self is a subliminal consciousness, or rather unconsciousness, while man's ordinary surface consciousness is somewhat illusory, and to the higher self, i. e., to the subliminal consciousness, no dividing line exists between it and the surface consciousness, or between it and God."

I trust that this was a satisfactory explanation to the mind and heart of Dr. Campbell. For my own part, I do not believe that Sister Eddy, even in her palmiest days, ever pressed more cracked brain nonsense in so many words as we have expressed here. Here forsooth, we are offered in the place of our heaven-sent message as our last court of appeal and one guide, a consciousness of which we can possibly know nothing until it rises to the surface, and the moment it does thus come within the range of things actually conscious to us, it becomes just ordinary, deceptive, illusory surface consciousness.

The New Theology stands before the world, at best, with a crumbling Bible in its hand, and even what they have allowed to remain has been robbed of all authority as an infallible rule of faith and practice. Man is reduced, in his search for a spiritual guide, to a condition that is purely subjective and to the cry of the soul for light and guidance their only answer comes, "You have all the light there is within yourself." The denial